

NAME: Yamada, Mine DATE OF BIRTH: 8/22/1901 PLACE OF BIRTH: Wakayama  
Age: 75 Sex: F Marital Status: W Education: 8 yrs & 2 yrs sewing & 1 yr of  
supplementary school

## PRE-WAR:

Date of arrival in U.S.: 5/30/1920 Age: 19 M.S. M Port of entry: San Fran.  
Occupation/s: 1. Farmer 2. Store owner 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Place of residence: 1. Vacaville, Ca. 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious affiliation: None  
Community organizations/activities: \_\_\_\_\_

## EVACUATION:

Name of assembly center: Turlock  
Name of relocation center: Gila River Camp, Arizona  
Dispensation of property: Own Store/Friend's home Names of bank/s: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jobs held in camp: 1. Canteen 2. \_\_\_\_\_  
Jobs held outside of camp: Housekeeper (After leaving camp)  
Left camp to go to: Philadelphia, Penn. (1944)

## POST-WAR:

Date returned to West Coast: August 1955  
Address/es: 1. Philadelphia, Penn (10 yrs) 2. Hollywood, California  
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
Religious affiliation: Christian Church  
Activities: 1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_  
If deceased, date, place and age at time of death: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe Date: 8/25/76 Place: Hollywood, Ca.

*Translator: Takako Yoshida*



NAME: MRS. MINE YAMADA

Age: 75 years old

Birthdat: August 22, 1901

Place of Birth: Wakayama

Came to the United States: 1920 (as a new bride)

Major Occupation:

Husband's Occupation:

Relocation Camp: Gila River Camp

Interview Date: August 25, 1976

Interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe

Translated Date: January, 1979

Translator: Takako M. Yoshida



NAME: MRS. MINE YAMADA

Q: There are no memoirs of the Issei, so we would like to ask you about your past experiences and translate them into English. Our objective is for the Sansei and the Yonsei to read the experiences and hardships the Issei endured. I would like to ask you about the time you were in Japan, the reasons for coming to America, and your experiences in America. I would like to follow your life through your various phases.

A: Yes.

Q: What is your name?

A: My name is Yamada Mine.

Q: Where were you born?

A: I was born in Wakayama prefecture in the town called Tanaka-mura Nagawa district, but the name has changed now. The town's name now is Uchita-chō. When I was little my area was called Tanaka-mura, Owada Tanaka-bata.

Q: Was it a small or a large village?

A: It was a small village; well, actually, the village itself was large, but the section (where I lived) was not very big. Our section had quite a few able bodied men, but it seems many left so there were only a few people remaining.

Q: Were most of the residents farmers?

A: Yes, most of them were.

Q: Was it Okayama or Wakayama prefecture?

A: Wakayama prefecture - sometimes called Kishū.

Q: When were you born?

A: I was born in the 34th year of Meiji (1901) on August 22nd.



Q: Then, how old will you be this year?

A: I am 75 years old. I've really become a grandmother. (laugh)

Q: Do you remember about your childhood?

A: Yes, I do. I liked school. Because I liked school so much that my mother would make me go to school even when I had a headache. She would say, 'you like school so much so if you go to school your headache will get better. (This is so different from American mothers who insist that their children stay home even with just a minor cold). And if your headache doesn't get better, then let the school attendant bring you home.' The school attendant was always kind to me and he would say, 'since you are a Hasegawa of the Ita Basin and your mother has always been kind to me, I'll take care of you.' So my mother often told me to go to this school attendant and have him bring me home.

Q: How many years did you go to school?

A: I went up to the eighth grad. After I graduated, I went for two more years to Seitsu Sewing School. Then, I went another additional year to the Hoshūkan (supplementary school).

Q: You went to school for many years didn't you?

A: Yes, I did.

Q: Do you remember what you did for fun when you were young?

A: When I was young? Well . . . I went to festivals with my friends. We would go to a nearby bridge and play with mud and make rice balls (odango) from it and get leaves and wrap the mud rice balls and pretend like the day was a festival and have a feast with everyone. We also used to play hide-in-go-seek. Also, I used get some small plantings from my father and my elder sister and I would plant them. When the neighborhood temple priest would come by and we would pull them up, grab it, and run away from him.



These are some of the things that happened. Perhaps this may be too bold, <sup>to say</sup> but our family was the envy of our neighbors. I had three sisters. We were a very happy family. I was raised in a good family. My sister and I would always say to ourselves, 'how lucky were are to be so blessed with such a happy home. We must always thank God for our good fortunes.'

Q: This was when you were young?

A: Yes.

Q: What did your father do?

A: My father was a dedicated farmer. He was a forthright man. He participated in the farmer's association as a representative (of our area). He was a man who farmed diligently.

Q: Was your father a strict disciplinarian or . . . ?

A: Well. . . he was both strict and kind. He was a good father.

Q: Do you remember being scolded?

A: Yes, of course. But, I wasn't scolded too often. My sister got in trouble more than I. I remember that. I don't think my father scolded me too much (that's how I remember it anyway.).

Q: Are you the youngest child?

A: Yes, I was. Then, when I was about 13, my younger sister was born. From then on, I was called Nakahan (the middle child) by everyone.

Q: What was your mother like?

A: My mother was truly a good person. We had neighbors . . . during the Obon or New Year's seasons, my mother would clean and alter our old clothes for our neighbors and give these to them. My mother would also weave her own fabric (do you know the term hata o oru, a term used during the War?) for Obon and New Years festivals. During the summer, she would make shor sleeved light weight over-shirt. Before New Years, she would make our under-



garments (nekujiban and battchi). (My mother was . . . our house was located on the bottom of (chika - basement). In the northern part, we couldn't UNCLEAR )

My mother . . . sometimes our teacher would be absent and the class would be very rawdy and the teacher next door would have to come to our class and scold us. When I would tell my mother how noisy our class was with the teacher's absence, she would say, 'that's not very good. Even if your teacher is not there, you should be a good child because God is always watching over you.' My mother used to say such things. Since I was little, my mother was like this. It wasn't that she knew about Jesus Christ, but she always said that God watched over us from above. So, Reverend, it was easy for me to become a Christian. Japan was a (hoyasan. My mother was a Shintoist; she was a Miyasan, but became a kōyasan.

Q: What did you like in school the most?

A: In school? Well . . . I guess reading and writing. Anyway, Reverend, even after becoming a Christian I have been (shakishaki) and I feel that I don't have enough Christian qualities. In those days I was told to speak clearly, be spirited and outgoing during our physical education class like the boys. In fact, I've never been able to get rid of these habits. I'm sort of embarrassed about it.

Q: No, that's really cute. Do you remember your teachers well?

A: Yes I do. I had both good and bad teachers. The bad teachers were not like that directly to me, but . . . For example, I had a classmate name Takahashi Masae who came from the Hirano area and she had a slight speech impediment (her tongue would not roll too well). I believe this incident occurred while we were reading Nihon kaikai sen. There is a book called Rikusenimanakaba.



My classmate, Masae, pronounced this word as "jikusen" instead of the proper "rikusen". Masae kept pronouncing the word incorrectly no matter how many times the teacher corrected her. At the end she started to cry. This teacher got furious and screamed, "You Idiot". I was so saddened by this incident. I thought to myself, why doesn't he have more patience and teach her properly. He could have written the word in katakana and said "this is the right way to pronounce it: ri-ku-sen. Now go practice it at home". This would have helped her a great deal. I disliked the teacher tremendously. I do not like such things. I felt so sorry for her. I tried to comfort her after school. Yes, there were incidents like this. Because my elder sister excelled in school, I was treated with kindness from the teachers. I did well in school.

Q: Were there any big events while you were living in your village, like earthquakes, tidlewaves, or a war?

A: No, ther were no such events. When a storm came it would destroy a small house nearby or it blew parts of our roof, but aside from these things, there weren't anything catastrophic like typhoons (people now call storms typhoon, but we called them nihakutōka and nihakuhatsuka in those days). I really don't recall any disasters.

Q: Did you have a grandmother or grandfather . . .

A: I had a grandmother.

Q: Did she live with you?

A: Yes, she did. We took good care of her. When she sat down to eat, she always ate first. We took very good care of her. If we said anything mean to her we would get in trouble by our father.



We really took very good care of her.

Q: Did your grandmother say things that bothered you and your sisters?

A: No, she didn't. She used to be in the theater in Osaka, the Senryō-yakusha and performed in the theater. We farmers have never gone to the theater and our grandmother who had experiences in the theater would tell us stories about it. My grandmother was never strict, she was really a nice lady. In fact, when we had school plays or school matches, the school would reserve a seat especially for my grandmother, saying, "this is Hasegawa's (that was my maiden name) grandmother's seat". The school treated her really nice also.

Q: How many years lapsed between the time you graduated from school and the time you got married? Did you get married right away?

A: Yes, I did. I helped on the farm between the duration. I also took flower arrangement lessons every week.

Q: What did you do after school every day?

A: I don't really recall doing much after school. I just remember reviewing and preparing for my lessons all the time. There weren't anything special I had to do.

Q: You went to the Yamada household as a bride, right? How did that come about?

A: Well, someone from the Yamada family had gone to my mother's family as a bride three generations back. And this time, I went as a bride. My mother's blood relative did not marry outsiders. It's not like this now, but ( unclear ). When Yamada returned from America in search of a wife, a neighbor told my grandmother on my mother's side about him and suggested this match, saying it was a fateful match. So, my grandmother approached us and asked, "what shall we do?" Since we already knew the blood lineage



the Yamada family and there won't be a need for a big conference between the two families. They told me that if I was for it I should go there as a bride. I went to the Yamada family as a third generation connection. My mother would always insist, "you must know many things: if you are to be a good wife in the main family branch and you have to know how to do this and that; you must know how to make your own omochi, you must know how to serve everyone properly and you must always eat before everyone else." She always told me these things. I thought to myself, 'what bothersome etiquette these Japanese are involved. Maybe I should go to the United States.' These were some of my thoughts. I didn't object to this arranged marriage.

Q: Had you ever met Mr. Yamada before?

A: No, I hadn't. But, my elder sister knew him quite well. Of course my parents knew him too, had known him since he was in junior high school.

Q: Did you then go through the arranged marriage procedure?

A: Yes, just as a formality with my grandmother. We gave our formal greetings to the matchmaker.

Q: Was Mr. Yamada there?

A: Yes, he was. The matchmaker was ours.

Q: What was your impression of him?

A: Well, I really didn't have any particular impressions of him. It's strange, isn't?

Q: How did you feel knowing this man was going to be your husband?

A: I didn't have any particular feelings about him.

Q: How old were you then?

A: I was nineteen

Q: How old was he?



A: He was 32 or 33.

Q: Did he look like an "older" man?

A: Well, I guess so.

Q: Then what happened?

A: I was suppose to go with him but . . .

Q: What about the wedding?

A: The wedding took place at my home on January 11.

Q: How many years ago was that?

A: in 1920.

Q: And then what happened?

A: I stayed in Japan for some time. In March or was it in May? Anyway, my elder brother who was a Shinto priest told us to go to the doctor and registor our marriage so we sent to the office. From there, we just walked around. I was supposed to go to America with my husband, but I had an eye problem so my husband left alone. I left in May. I left in May . . . I arrived in June . . . no, I arrived on May 20th, no, closer to May 30th. Then, when I arrived in America, I was sent to an island depot . . .

Q: <sup>Angle</sup> Angle Island?

A: Yes, yes. I arrived on Memorial Day so I had to stay there for a day or two.

Q: How long did you stay on Angle Island?

A: for two days.

Q: Did they allow you to leave right away?

A: Yes, I left right away.

Q: What about your eye problem? Did you get it examined in Japan?

A: Yes. I couldn't pass the eye examination in Japan so my husband told me to get medical treatment and that he would leave ahead of me to America.



Q: Where did you leave from?

A: from Kobe.

Q: So, did you stay in Kobe for some time?

A: Yes, I did. I had an uncle there and he owned a business so I stayed at this home all that time.

Q: How long did you stay with him?

A: Well, let's see . . . the ship left on March 11 . . . so a little over a month.

Q: You boarded the ship in Kobe?

A: yes, at Kobe.

Q: What kind of people were on board with you?

A: Different types of people There was an influenza epidemic and a man had lost his wife as a result and he had returned to marry his wife's younger sister. Marrying picture brides were going to be shortly terminated, so many men had come home to get marry. There were a lot of men aboard the ship who had come home to marry their picture brides. I had developed a close friendship with a (lady) in Kobe and we had many happy times together going to ( ) for over a month.

Q: Do you have any special memories about your ship ride?

A: Well, we all got along fine and we enjoyed being together a lot. We were like children having fun together.

Q: What kind of things did you do for fun?

A: We would play janken and if scissors won, that person would walk two steps; things like that. We also put on plays. Mr. Kinoshita who was a friend of my aunt (my Kobe uncle's wife) was also on board with us. He was a Salvation Army officer in Yokohama and he introduced us to some of the members of the crew, in particular, the petty officer and his nephew. That was very nice. They took



good care of us. They would do things for us like making us chocolate. This was such a novel thing for we never had such a thing like chocolate in Japan in those days. The petty officer would say to his nephew, "go make some good food" and he would offer the food to us. It was a fun experience for us. It was great to be on ship. It wasn't until I came here (to the United States) that I went through my hardships.

Q: Did you get seasick?

A: No, not very much. Just a little in the beginning. The Japanese returnees on board with us offered to treat us to a feast when we landed in Hawaii where we stayed over night for one day. And, they did keep their promise, too. They were so very kind to us. We really appreciated their kindness and generosity.

Q: How did you feel when you entered Angle Island?

A: Well, we all wondered why we had to go to a place like that when we hadn't done anything bad. A young bride from Hiroshima (who didn't \_\_\_\_\_ marry) started to cry and said, "Oh (how terrible)! This is why I didn't want to come !" I felt so sorry for her. I'm sure she was also young and she was crying. Poor girl, I thought to myself. But, I made friends there (on Angle Island).

Q: When you first entered Angle Island what did you do? When you landed there, did they examine you right away?

A: Well . . .

Q: Did you get a physical examination?

A: A physical exam? Gee, did we have a physical? No, I think we had one before we actually landed.

Q: After you landed, you were put in a room, right?

A: Yes, that's right. There was a netted bed.

Q: Like a (fishnet)?



A: Yes, yes, that's right.

Q: Was it a small room?

A: No, it was a big room.

Q: Were there many people there with you?

A: Yes. When I heard about the people who had come by first class and had never been to a place like this, I often felt we were such inferiors.

Q: This was after you were put there?

A: Yes, ( unintelligible )

Q: You were there for only two days, right?

A: Yes.

Q: Were there some people who had been there for a long time?

A: Yes, there were. There was a woman who had been there for a long time because her husband's status was not clear. However, she didn't seem to be suffering too much. She was singing and trying to make the best of it.

Q: Weren't there some Chinese as well?

A: Yes, there were Chinese there too. There were some really attractive Chinese girls there.

Q: "little girls"? About how old were they?

A: Oh, this particular girl was about 17 or 18 (in fact, we were all young). There were some very pretty girls there.

Q: Did all of you stay in one room?

A: Yes, we did. The room was large so we all stayed in the same room. The place was on an island, but the security was very strict, all **surrounded by nets. All of us felt like we were prisoners.**

We felt like we were in Korea.

Q: Do you remember having problems with sanitation?

A: No, not particularly.



Q: Do you remember having problems going to the bathroom?

A: No, I don't. I've forgotten, but I don't think we had those kind of problems.

Q: There weren't any doors to the bathrooms, right?

A: Probably no. In those days, probably not. I don't remember too well.

Q: What happened then?

A: Then on the first or the second (of June) . . . I guess we went by ship . . . we arrived here by ship . . . I don't remember too clearly.

Q: Did your husband meet you?

A: Yes, he came to meet me.

Q: Where did you meet each other? On Angle Island?

A: No, I think I went from Angle Island by boat to . . .

Q: to San Francisco?

A: Yes, that's right. I believe so. I've forgotten. I don't remember too clearly.

Q: Then, you landed in San Francisco?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you happy then?

A: Yes. I was happy because the long journey was all over with.

Q: When you saw San Francisco, what was your impression? Did you think it was a pretty place?

A: Yes, I thought San Francisco was beautiful.

Q: What was your husband doing at that time?

A: He was a farmer.

Q: Where?

A: In a place called Vacaville.

Q: What happened after this?



A: Well . . .

Q: He came to get you in San Francisco and then . . .

A: Then we went to Vacaville.

Q: How did you go to Vacaville?

A: We went by train. No, we took a ferry boat to Fairfield-Suisun, then we went to a place called El Mira. A friend came to pick us up at El Mira in a car.

Q: What were your impressions about Vacaville when you first arrived there?

A: Well . . . . at first, I didn't think too much of it. Since Vacaville fruit grew early in the season, many people from the surrounding areas would come there to work. There was a person from Wakayama prefecture - there were many Japanese from the sea coast towns. The Japanese spoke in a rough manner. That was the very first thing I disliked about the area. Men would call other people on'shi; perhaps it's a derivation of onushi, but they would use the word on'shi. I know the word obasan (grandmother or aunt), but everyone used oban, the men would use the word to me. I often thought to myself, "how strange these people talk." Some men would say to me, "I'm so sorry people call you oban when you are such a young lady." These were some of the things that surprised me.

Q: These men (in Vacaville) weren't too educated were they?

A: I believe there were more who were not educated. But, most of my husband's friends had some schooling. All of them had gone to junior high school and then came here (to the United States). It wasn't that those people didn't have schooling, but . . . . My husband was a quiet man and many people said that they couldn't tease or joke with him too much. People said, "we can't tease or joke around in front of Mr. Yamada". But, he did help people



those people who lived alone or women in need of help.

Q: Were you surprised by America? Did you ever think, "so this is America?"

A: Yes, I did at first. My husband took me to work to eat at his ( employer's place?) and I was very surprised. There were so many flies on the food. The place had a screen on the door, but there were so many flies inside. We had some Shinagawa rice. The flies made me a little sick. I thought to myself, "so this is America"?

Q: Were you ever disappointed (in coming here)?

A: Yes, when I actually came here. Yes . . . so far away . . . to come to a place so far away like this . . . is so sad.

Q: Did your husband own a house?

A: No, we lived with my husband's friend's family.

Q: Did you two live together in one room (in the house)?

A: Yes.

Q: Were your husband's friends married?

A: Yes, some were and others had wives back in Japan and ran the farm themselves.

Q: Were there many housewives?

A: Yes, there were many. Some were single and were ready to marry. There were others who had come much earlier and quite a bit older, too. I was quite close to a (lady?) from Yamato, particularly with his/her younger sister named Mrs. Matsuda. She was so kind to me - treated me like her own daughter.

Q: What kind of work did you do?

A: I farmed, also. I packed fruits like dried prunes (\_\_\_\_\_).

Q: Was the work strenuous?

A: Yes, it was. Hours were very long.

Q: About how many hours did you work (a day)?



A: Well . . . when I bore children, I took them to work about 6 in the morning. I usually came home before dinner, then cooked dinner. Life was very hard in those days, Reverend. Really hard. I had many hardships since coming to the United States.

Q: Did you have children right away?

A: Yes, I did. I had my first child in May of the following year (after I arrived here).

Q: How long did you stay there (in your friend's home)?

A: For some time. Then we changed farms and we lived in a small house. (we lived in a house separated from the owner's house \_\_\_\_\_).

Q: You probably were very self-conscious while living with another family.

A: Yes, that's true. So, we decided to go to another farm.

Q: What was the most difficult thing for you during the first 5 to 10 years.

A: Well . . . about the time my child was . . . how old was he/she. . . Cars were cheap in those days . . . a Ford . . . I was told it was 508 yen (dollars?). We bought that car. The car was in pretty good shape. We bought the car in cash and talked about how many things became convenient because of it. Then a little after this, Yamada had very high temperature and he wasn't able to work for a while. We needed wood, the stove and bath had to have wood. We needed wood. He couldn't work. Groceries were delivered - they delivered as much as we needed; we didn't have problems about eating or drinking, but to have a sick man like that . . . The owner of the farm came to see us and he said, (\_\_\_\_\_). I felt so hopeless then. I felt we would really be like that. I was so worried. Mr. Takahashi came to cut wood for us and some other people helped us quite a bit. I felt so hopeless, wondering what would



happen if my husband died.

Q: How long was he ill?

A: About two weeks.

Q: What happened to the farm in the meanwhile?

A: The farm . . . we told the owner about our situation and he said for us not to worry and that he'll take care of it. He told us not to worry about the farm and just to take care of my husband. The owner's name was Chandler, Arthur Chandler. He was a good person. Things turned out (well at the end).

Q: What kind of farm was it?

A: Predominately a dried fruit farm.

Q: Was he a sharecropper?

A: No, he worked (for someone).

Q: When did he get ill?

A: About 5 or 6 years after I came here.

Q: Did you already have a child?

A: Yes, I had one.

Q: How many children do you have all together?

A: Three in all.

Q: Did you get used to the farm life in America right away?

A: Well, yes. I had no other choice. After my second child was born the baby developed a rash. That was another period of some difficulties. We sent to Sacramento and stayed in the hospital for some time - going back and forth. Oh, what a time of hardship. I began to dislike America. I began to develop some anxieties and became a little neurotic, too. My husband kept saying "why don't you go back to Japan. Go back to Japan". In 1926, I did return to Japan for 6 months. For 6 months I stayed at my family's and



and my husband's home with my children, going back and forth between the two. But, at the end, I got sick of Japan, too. What extravagance, isn't it? So, I came back.

Q: Why did you get tired of America?

A: Because I became nervous.

Q: Was this because there weren't too many Japanese where you were?

A: No, not because of that.

Q: Were you lonely?

A: No, I wasn't that lonely, but to have had those two experiences . . . I became a little lonely. Then, when our son was a sophomore in high school he said he didn't like school . . . I got ill over that. I developed anxieties over this. I began to regret coming to America. (In retrospect) I was probably lonely.

Q: Customs are different here, too, isn't it?

A: Yes, that's true. I should have gone through some hard times in Japan, but I didn't. Had I had some experiences it might have been different for me in America. I could then have endured some difficulties.

Q: Child-rearing is different here in America and you didn't have your parents with you . . .

A: Yes, yes that's true. But having gone through these hard times, are good experiences for me.

Q: You said a little while ago that there were many single men in Vacaville.

A: Yes, there were.

Q: I have often heard that these men, particularly the single men, liked to gamble and . . .

A: Yes, they did. They had places where they could do those things.

Q: In restaurants and places like that?



A: I don't know if they had restaurants.

Q: There were places to gamble, weren't there?

A: Yes, to gamble. My husband didn't like things like that and he had never gone to such places. I've heard of instances where the husbands who had brought their wives from Japan would leave them alone in a remote area while they gamble all night long in these places. The owner of the farm would bring their wives to where the husbands are and she would write gambling notes for their husbands. The men would claim that they were poisoned by the people there and get very angry. I'm sure other wives had much more difficulties than I. In this respect, I was very fortunate.

A: Were there many wives who came here as picture brides that were living in Vacaville.

Q: Well . . . I didn't hear of many wives like that. There probably were some. There were picture brides on board with me while coming to America. Mrs. Fukui whom I visited after 39 years told me recently before she died, "Mrs. Yamada, when I saw my husband for the first time and saw that he was so small . . . oh, how dissappointed I was." I thought she had said "Mrs Yamada, when I my house for the first time and it was so small . . ." so I said to her, "if you work, you can always build a bigger house". I had gone with my daughter and she told me I had misheard what she said to me. When we got home, my daughter said, "mother, Mrs. Fukui was talking about her husband not her house". We really got a good laugh on this one.

Q: Did you ever hear of picture brides who had gone through many difficulties and hardships?

A: Yes, I did. I have heard of cases where the pictures and the real person were not the same at all. Or, the bride would come to the



United States with the expectation of the man having a large business, but when she came, all of it were lies.

Q: Anything else?

A: I really don't know. I wasn't in their circle. My friends were from Yamato and there weren't too many picture brides among them. My husband had some friends with picture brides, but I myself didn't hear too much about them. I really didn't hear of such things.

Q: Did you ever hear of stories of men who lost money through gambling?

Yes, I did. There was a man, a really hardworking good man, but when he lost money he would lie and write bad checks. I hear that his wife really suffered as a result and thought of going back to Japan. In this respect, I was very fortunate. My husband didn't gamble at all. Then again, we didn't have much money either. He didn't do such things. Reverend, we were never rich, but we really didn't go without. We were able to eat and live - we survived.

Q: What time did you get up in those early days?

A: Well, my husband went to work at 7AM and I would get up at 6AM to make breakfast.

Q: After that, did you leave for work?

A: Yes, if I was working. I didn't work in the winter season. Some ladies would take jobs burning leaves and bushes or hoeing in the winter season, but my husband didn't want me to do such things. He said it wasn't worth it since I would probably earn so little (20 to 30¢) and he said I should stay home during the winter months so I would become ill. He often said women did not have the same physical stamina as men and that I shouldn't do such things.

Q: In the summer did you get up at 6AM, feed the children and leave for work?

A: Yes, I did. I took care of the children and left for work.



Q: What about lunch time?

A: I left lunch for my children. After work I would wash the diapers, fix and eat dinner, bathe my children, prepare for the next day (wash rice, and so forth), and do other routine work. By the time I was done it was 2 or 3 in the morning. This was my routine for the entire summer. I really worked hard in those days. Though I had to do those things, I never talked about (my hardships) when I returned to Japan.

Q: Why?

A: The past is the past. I might have complained when I was young, but I don't speak about it now. I have gone home twice in recent years. I just saw that I am very happy and very appreciative of recent times.

Q: Depression hit about 10 years after you came here, right?

A: Yes, we didn't have money often and had to borrow money.

Q: ( )

A: Yes, There was an old man from Wakayama name Mr. Yoshimura. In fact, his son is in a shoe business in Sacramento.

Q: Really? Mr. Yoshiyama?

A: No, Mr. Yoshimura. Frank Yoshimura is his name. He is such a nice man. Frank went to the University of California. He had returned to Wakayama to attend junior high school there and he returned to the United States after that - I don't know if it was because he couldn't get into high school. He wanted to be a doctor and he went to U.C for four years. He changed his mind or something, but he didn't complete his education. This man's father was very kind kind to us. He treated us like a member of his family. We also returned his kindness. When we didn't have money, my husband would say, "we have to go the see old Mr. Yoshimura and borrow some money."



We are still very good friends.

Q: Did you have any problems with food?

A: NO, we didn't. As I told you earlier, the grocer would give us credit so we really didn't have any problems about food.

Q: This was after you returned from Japan, right?

A: Yes, that's right. After my return from Japan.

Q: Were there others who had problems and difficulties?

A: Yes, there were. When we lived in town some of the people would ask to borrow baths or soy sauce.

Q: Were they Japanese?

A: Yes. Japanese. There were other people who had more hardships than we. I'm sure of that.

Q: Do you remember anything else about the Depression?

A: Depression? We rented some mountain plots during that time - it was 1932, right?

Q: yes, that's right.

A: Yes, the Depression. I think we rented it for sharecropping. There were some disagreeable people who did strang things. They meddled into other people's business and these people were usually not very well educated. So, my husband got disgusted with them and he quit his job. Yes, strange things happened.

Q: When you came here, how did you feel about the White Americans?

A: White Americans? I couldn't understand their language, but they were all very nice. I didn't meet too many of them who weren't nice. I remember White Americans being very nice.

Q: Do you recall any happy moments in those early days just after arriving in America?

A: Happy times? Well . . . I guess happy moments were when our friends would get to gether like during Chrismas and New Years, drinking



talking and enjoying each others company. We also enjoyed going to picnics and things like that.

Q: What kind of sad events do you recall?

A: Sad events? Well . . . When we started to live in town we had a really mean neighbor. I really disliked them very much.

Q: What kind of mean things would they do?

A: They were such pitiful people. They would talk up a storm and people called them BIG MOUTH because of this. They would meddle into other people's affairs, get in people's way. Oh, it was really disgusting. What pitiful people. They were ostracized. I've forgotten such things now, though.

Q: Was this after living in Vacaville?

A: No, while we lived in Vacaville.

Q: Weren't you living with the owner of a ranch while living in Vacaville

A: No, the year after the 1932 Depression we bought a store. We managed a shop.

Q: What kind of store did you have?

A: We had a store which sold ice cream and soft drinks.

Q: What was the name of your store?

A: We really didn't have a name. It was a store Mr. Yoshimura owned.

Q: Going back a bit, you talked about a strange person. Was this the time you . . .

A: Yes, it was that time.

Q: During the time you had the store?

A: Yes, it was. No, it was when we worked on the mountain ranch.

Q: What was the mountain? What kind of ranch was it?

A: It was a \_\_\_\_\_ ranch. There were plots of land up a tall mountain. We called it the "hill ranch".



Q: Was it a dried fruit ranch?

A: No, it was predominately a packing ranch.

Q: What kind of packing? Pear and things like that?

A: No, we didn't have pears. ( ) - that was later. We had appricots

\_\_\_\_\_ anyway it was a fairly large packing field.

Q: You said disagreeable things happened there. Such as?

A: Mrs Sharp owned the ranch. She owned the ranch at the foot of the hill too. On this side of the mountain, at the foot of the mountain, a man had working there a long time. The boss trusted him quite well since he had been working there a long time. The boss's name was Anna (Sharp), a school teacher and she rented the land to us. When my husband began to rent a plot of land, this man began to complain.

Q: Was he Japanese?

A: Yes, he was Japanese. A Japanese. A Japanese. His name was Nakamura. My husband would come home after work and tell me this man (he was called Takehan) had said this and that to him. My husband farmed for one year, but this man kept intefering in my husband's work so Yamada got disgusted and quit.

Q: What do you mean that this man kept intefering? Would he go to Mrs. Sharp and complain?

A: Yes, he would go to Mrs. Sharp and complain saying negative things about us. He was that type of man. So, my husband quit. When it was time to settle accounts with Mrs Sharp, this man wouldn't say anything when there were miscalculations. My husband always paid his bills properly. When business transactions were to be settled and when my husband, the buyer and Mrs. Sharp were doing business, there were no mistakes, but when Mr. Nakamura got involved the figures would not coincide with the account. My husband was annoyed



so he quit. This man would say that only the Japanese people would do the job and he would keep the profits for himself when the buyers would be contracted to buy fruits and do the packing business at a set price. This man would intefering so many things like this. He wasn't the only one doing such things; there were many who did such things in those days. Those people dishonest.

Q: Soon thereafter you bought a store?

A: Yes.

Q: HOW was the business?

A: The store did quite well, thanks to the customers. Becuase we did so well, the store next to us began to bother us (jealous).

Q: Was it the same kind of store as yours?

A: No, it wasn't. They had a grocery store. We had many customers . . . when we arrived there at first this neighbor was very nice to us saying "lets lend each other a hand and help each other out". They were nice in the beginning. We were grateful of this, but then they became so negative toward us we just couldn't continue our friendship. It was quite disgusting (what they would do) and others knew about this situation, too. I certainly disliked things like this. I dislkied such things the most. This was the most digusting experience for me.

Q: Did they come to the store and complain to you?

A: Yes, they did. They would come to our store (through the front door) every day and wave their hands at me. I really dislike it I could have reacted to this, but I didn't. I couldn't (I'm just not like that). It bothered me tremendously.

Q: What happened to your neighbor's store?

A: They had to sell out. They sold it before the War. That was very good. They couldn't hold on to it even before the War. I was



very happy they sold the store. (\_\_\_\_\_). I heard they went to the countryside and did some farming.

Q: How many years did you have the store?

A: Let's see . . . we bought i in 1932 or 1933 and had it until the beginning of the war. Our customers were so kind to us and patronized the store frequently. We were able to install new appliances, things like a new refrigerator for the sodas we sold and our customers could select their own. We put money into improving the store, but . . . you know what happend.

Q: Do you mean the War?

A: Yes.

Q: How many employees did you have? Did you have employees?

A: No, we didn't employ anyone else. I did most all of the work.

Q: What about your husband?

A: He went to work as a hired helper. So, I did most of the work.

Q: You must have been very busy, then.

A: Yes, I was very busy. I used to move around and use my body constant I ~~g~~wrked so hard that I often fell asleep in the bathtub. I could easily have fallen asleep while taking a bath. I really worked hard.

Q: What time did you start in the morning?

A: I started late in the mornings. I would send my children off to school then start working at the store. Evenings were late, though

Q: What time?

A: Until about 12 midnight.

Q: You were selling ice cream and things like that at the store?

A: Yes. We also had pool tables. Playing pool is frowned upon now but in those days it wasn't anything bad, even Sacramento had some. We didn't darken the room at all. The tables were located in the



main part of the store. WE had two pool tables and they were very profitable. We wouldn't allow betting in our store, it was to be played just for fun. Pool was very popular. People enjoyed playing pool for fun and our customers would say that if went to a gambling place they would just loose their money so they enjoyed coming to our place. We ahd a lot of cutomers.

Q: HOW did you mkae money on the pool tables? Did you charge them 10 or 20 cents per hour?

A: No, we didn't do that. We charge 5¢ a game. If a person was really good, he would be ( ) in just one or two games. Other pool places owned by White Americans charged 5¢ per person, 10¢ for 2 and 15¢ for 3 people. There were two other places which ahd pool tables, 3 including ours and they charged 5¢ a game so we did too. So if someone who was very good came and he stayed for an hour, we would make quite a bit in an hour.

Q: You managed this by yourself?

A: Yes, I did. If the player was good, I would even help set the balls up for him. I enjoyed doing this.

Q: HOW old were the children at this time?

A: My son had already entered high school. The younger cild . . . graduated from the 6th grade during our stay in camp. No, he had entered high school. The older one graduated from high school at this time. He liked candy and ate aloft of it. He ruined his teetl

Q: You also sold candy?

A: Yes, we did. We sold candy, osen, and books from Japan.

Q: Osen?

A: Yes, osenbei (Japanese rice crackers.)

Q: Candy, soda, and ice cream?

A: Yes, cigaretts too.



Q: That's really a lot of things to sell. It kept you busy, didn't it?

A: Yes.

Q: Did your children help?

A: No, they didn't. I was so busy that I didn't have time to gossip.

Q: Very interesting. Did you start going to Church while you were living in Vacaville?

A: Yes, I went to Church. My children often went to Church. My son was in the Boy Scouts and most of the boys in Boy Scouts were Christians. If there were any church events, the boys would come come pick him up. The church was ( ). The boys and my son also went to a Japanese school operated by the Japanese association and their teacher was a Buddhist. So, the boys went to a Buddhist church too as well as going to regular church. As I look back, I'm really embarrassed. My neighbor goes to church located on 11th and Jefferson and I also have a friend who attends a Baptist Church. We often talk about the past asking each other, "what were the Christians doing in those day?" We certainly didn't study the gospels.

Q: I heard that the Kenshū Movement was populat at one time there. Do you know anything about it?

A: Kenshū? No, Kinshū?

Q: Yes, Kinshū

A: Oh, Kinshū Movement. Perhaps.

Q: Do you know anything about it?

A: No, not really. Buddhist members gossiped about Christians a lot in those days. Christian also talked badly about the Buddhist. I didn't like either of them. I didn't belong to either of the facti  
I just listened to them talk for I didn't think gossiping was very good. I told Mrs. Miyasaki who now lives here and went to Church



quite often in those days that she never told us about the fukuen (Church) back then. Said said to me, "yes that's true. I wonder what we were doing back then." Kusanagi, who has passed away and was quite rich joined Christianity and was saved in Vacaville. Hayashi, our old neighbor when we lived on a farm also went to church. He was also from Kishū. Mr(s) Darnell knew how to pray so beautifully and (obasan) said she couldn't pray as beautifully as Mr(s) Darnell. Mr(s) Darnell took my daughter to Church quite often. We had a Bible in our home, but she never offered to read it or teach us about the Bible.

Q: What kind of people came to your store?

A: We had many Buddhist. They were all so very nice.

Q: Were they mostly single?

A: Predominately young people came to the store. They were people who had graduated from junior high school in Japan and then came to this country. Most of them were young and very attractive. The older ones could understand English well. They were all gentlemen; our customers were all really nice.

Q: Were there many Japanese in Vacaville?

A: There were a lot in the summer.

Q: in the summer time?

A: Yes, many people came to Vacville in the summer, but when other areas began to produce early fruit crops the population began to decline. However, even before we started our store, there were many many Japanese in town during the summer.

Q: Did the population decline considerably before the beginning of the War?

A: Yes, it had declined already.

Q: How was the store?



A: Well . . . the store did alright. Many children came to buy soda. These children would leave their books before going to their after school Japanese school.

Q: Did you have White American customers?

A: Yes, they came quite often.

Q: Half and half?

A: Yes. The postman's son came to our store quite often.

Q: What was the percentage?

A: I think we had more Japanese customers. I worked hard, really hard in those days. I probably worked the hardest in the life in those days. Our customers would say, "gee . . . this lady sure works hard" and I would reply "I don't have much choice".

Q: Your husband went to help out in various places, right?

A: Yes.

Q: Were you financially well off then?

A: Well . . . so, so.

Q: When did your son say he didn't like school? Was it before this time?

A: No.

Q: After?

A: No, around the same time. I became a little neurotic around this time. I didn't . . . force him to go when he said he didn't like it. We told him to take pre-college courses in high school, but when he was a sophomore he began to tell us, "studying isn't going to make everyone smart. I don't care about school. I just want to finish school and that's all". I told him that this was not good. I said, "you must start preparing (for college) now". I told him this everyday. I always wondered what more I could do to (convince him). I became quite distraught over this. I guess I became



neurotic around this time, worrying about it everyday. I had a friend, the Iwasakis, who were members of the Kisukai). My husband told me to go visit them in San Francisco, so I went to San Francisco. They didn't know why I came to visit them but both welcomed me warmly saying, "oh, we are so happy to see after all these years." As we were talking I told them, "Iwashi-san, I am so worried. I have only one son and he doesn't like school. What am I going to do? I feel so terrible." They said, "our son is in Japan getting an education. We thought your son would turn out like this, but forcing a child to go to school when he doesn't want to go is not doing him any good. What if he gets ill. What will you do then? (they had a son named Tom) Our son, Tom, doesn't like school either, but he says that at least he'll be able to take care of his mother. So, Mrs. Yamada, you won't gain anything by (driving yourself crazy). If you continue to force him and he gets ill, what will you do? Isn't this more frightening?" I thought over what they said to me and I agreed. I stayed there for two or three days. I felt so much better after my visit with them. I thought to myself . . . what is all this? . . . My son doesn't like school and he told me that going to school did not assure him a successful life. . . I really suffered in those days over this. This was the hardest time for me.

Q: You said a little while ago that the children went to school in Japan.

A: Excuse me?

Q: Didn't you say the children were sent to school in Japan?

A: NO. I left my elder daughter in Japan when I returned the first time. I just brought my son home.



Q: You had another child, right?

A: yes.

Q: How many years did your daughter go to school in Japan?

A: Until she graduated from elementary school.

Q: Then she returned from Japan?

A: Yes, she returned. She returned right before the War.

Q: What happened to your son? School . . . ?

A: He graduated from high school

Q: What is he doing now?

A: He was a chicken inspector. He quit recently and he said something about doing some part-time work. He's helping out, he's working at a grocery store.

Q: Your son's job - the inspector's job - it needs training, not everyone can do it, right?

A: I guess so. When we were at ( ) he returned from the War and a friend from New Jersey . . . you know, the place where there are many Japanese . . . Seabrock. . . Sasaki came and invited my son to go with him. While I was not at home they went to a place called Lanceland or something. There is a school, a chicken inspector's school where Nitta lives. My son went. . . he didn't have any money . . . it was temporary, but my son said he went because his friend came and invited him.

Q: Was the relationship between the Japanese and White Americans bad in Vacaville right before the War?

A: No.

Q: You said you bought some new appliances for the store before the war. What were the White American's attitudes toward the Japanese before the War?

A: It wasn't so bad. When the Hawaiian incident occurred, we were



opened late. The police came and told us that Hawaii was attacked so we should be careful. He said, "some white Americans may harass you so don't go out too much."

Q: Was this a White policeman?

A: Yes, he told us to be very careful. This is how we heard about it for the first time and we were really shocked. We often listened to Japanese programs on short wave (I believe that it is called that). Not many people could get short wave on their radio and since we could people would come over and listen in the late evenings. We were listening to a program that evening when the police came and informed us of the news. We were all shocked.

Q: Were you ( ) in the store?

A: No, not at all.

Q: Were you worried?

A: No, we weren't worried, but the head of the family who bought the store where the disagreeable family lived was taken away (by the Whites, I believe). He was interned, taken away early in the internment period. Only the wife and the children remained and she believed that this was initiated by someone who knew them well.

Q: What kind of store was it?

A: It was a grocery store. We told her to scream loud if something strange happened to her and we would go and help her. We told her we had to help each other out because there probably would be more instances where the people would do strange things to us. But, no one bothered us, though.

Q: Was the store opened the whole time?

A: Yes. We closed early in the evenings. We still had some customers even in the evenings. But, the customers stopped coming in the evenings when the noctices warned us not to go out at night.



Q: Was your husband taken away?

A: NO, he wasn't. But they did come to check on us. My husband's cousins were in the Japanese military; they were Asagai's hirancho and they took great pride in that. We wondered if someone had told the authorities of this, but most of our acquaintances didn't know anything about this. Moreover, our daughter had gone to Japan for an education and came home right before the war so they did come to check on us because of this. When my daughter came home Lt. General Sugihara of the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture went to Korea for the War effort and after my daughter came home, the Chief of the Army had transferred and this General went onto the mainland (China). Our family didn't become war proponents. WE told the police this: that we did have family members in the Japanese military but they had resigned. They came to ask us questions quite often. We would tell the police, "our daughter, as you can see, is not a Japanese spy and she wouldn't do such things. Please believe us; there is nothing to be suspicious". They came to check about 3 times. I was very glad that we only had to deal with this.

Q: When you received the evacuation notices, what happened?

A: If someone would buy our store, we were willing to sell it. There was a very nice hard-working White customer from Suisun who came to our store quite often. We asked this man if he wanted to buy our store, but I guess he didn't like the idea since he said he didn't feel like buying it. We stored the things in the store. My husband gave the ice box to a lady, Mrs. McCurry who owned a large farm and whom my husband stusted. We stored the more important things with her and we also stored some of the other things with another farm family who lived on this side of the town, on a farm land near Chinatown, but they stole stole all of our things.



We stored our son's new car with Mrs. McCurry.

Q: What became of that? Was it alright?

A: Yes.

Q: What was her name?

A: McCurry. They have a large farm with beautiful cherry trees. Its located toward Vacaville as you come from Suisun. It's a very famous farm. Their son lives in New York and Mrs. McCurry told us that her son appeared in a newspaper or something. When she received a letter from him saying this she was so excited. They had a splendid farm. My husband was a good friend of theirs. So, we stored our things with them.

Q: Where did you take you other things? To Chinatown?

A: Yes, we stored it with a family named Waytut who had a house in Chinatown. He was a good customer of ours. We stored our sewing machine and other things with them. When the camp authorities told us we could send for some of our belongings, we decided to get our sewing machine back from them. When we contacted them, they told us that it was gone - just disappeared a long time ago.

Q: Who said this to you?

A: We asked someone to go visit the Waytuts and the person told us that our things were not there. We had stored a vacume cleaner, ice boxes, cashier box with the McCurrys.

Q: After you stored your things . . . What happened? Did you own your home?

A: No, we didn't. The bank owned it.

Q: So you were leasing it, right?

A: Yes.

Q: Then, what happened?

A: Then, we went to Turlock.



Q: How did you go there?

A: We went there by bus, I believe.

Q: Was everyone gathered up and taken there?

A: Yes. Was it by bus or train? I think we went by train.

Q: How long did you stay in Turlock?

A: Gee . . . how long did we stay there? I don't remember too well. I think we left the following day or so. I believe we left right way.

Q: How did you feel when they took you away to Turlock?

A: I felt very sad and strched. All the White people stared at us As we got on the train. . . . I think we went by train. . . . anyway, even those people who came to play pool at our store stared at us. I felt very disgusted at that time. There were customers and neighbors who sent us off. We shook hands and they said for us to take care of ourselves and we parted. When we were on the train, oh, I felt so ashamed and miserable. We didn't say a word. We didn't smile. It was a horrible feeling.

Q: What do you mean by "horrible" feeling?

A: Well, I didn't understand the relationship between the United States and Japan, we didn't know until it actually happened, but . . . War is horrible. I also thought "what did Japan do to us?"

Q: Did you think you were being taken away to be killed?

A: No, I didn't have such thoughts.

Q: What was it like being taken to Turlock? Weren't you put in barricks How did you feel?

A: Had I been alone, I would have been really lonely. There were many people so . . . I have courage, but I certainly didn't feel good.

Q: What about the food?

A: Food was not very good. There were a lot of seiners. Weiners and



and beans. That's what I remember.

Q: Were there many problems because the situation was so unsettled?

A: Yes. I think there were many problems. We would go clean the bathrooms as a group, but some people wouldn't at all and those people would dirty it and complain the most. One of the leaders chosen by us said that those who didn't do anything dirtied things the most. Co-operative living is very difficult.

Q: Where did you go after here?

A: We went to Arizona.

Q: Where did you go in Arizona?

A: We went to Gilo.

Q: How was Gilo?

A: It was a good place. The barracks were nice. Some of my friends who were in other camps told me that they had to make their own cooking arrangements, but we had gas stoves. We had to go get gas by the bucketful. It was a good place. When we got there, there was a storm. It came in a gust of wind, but it subsided after awhile. It was a good place.

Q: Was it a sand storm?

A: Yes.

Q: Did the houses become sandy after these storms?

A: Yes, Yes. The floors were bare and the sand would come up from the floor. WE had such things as this happen in the beginning, but later . . . some people said that since the Japanese came to Gilo outsiders wouldn't come around.

Q: Did you work?

A: Yes, I did. After I arrived and a little later . . . I must have been going through a change-of-life or something, I felt very ill. I got ill. After I got well, however, I began to work in the canteen



I worked hard.

Q: Did you sell things?

A: Yes, I had experiences working in a store so I worked in a canteen along with some young people. We had an enjoyable time.

Q: What did your husband do?

A: He worked in the mess hall. Everyone like him. He worked there. He worked at 23 . . . quite a distance from where I was.

Q: Did some events occur while you were in Gila River Camp? Within the camp?

A: In the camp?

Q: Some problems?

A: NO, no that I can recall

Q: Do you remember the problem of taking an allégiance oath?

A: Yes, Yes. I rembmber. The soldiers . . .

Q: Yes, they asked you whether you would give your allegiance to Japan or to the United States.

A: Yes, I remember?

Q: How did you feel about this?

A: My son went to sign it . . . you know the military pledge. I think he went with a large group of people. I told him, "when you go, just sign yes. You were born in this country and I don't think Japan will win against this country. Just sign yes, no matter who ways what." He said, alright, and left. But when he returned he said, "Mama, you told me to wirte yes, but all the others wrote no. I got uncomfortable. So, I signed Yes/No. So he told me he signed Yes/No.

Q: What did Yes mean?

A: Yes meant one was willing to go into the military service. No meant you didn't want to go into the military - it meant you didn't have



allegiance to this country.

Q: So there were two questions?

A: Yes.

Q: One was to be answered Yes or No and the other Yes/No?

A: Is that right? I didn't know too much about it. I didn't know what it all meant, but he said "everyone was writing No. You wanted me to sign Yes and I wanted to write Yes, sort of, but the people all around me signed No, so I decided to sign Yes/No.

Q: I see. Weren't you asked to do the same thing?

A: No, I don't think I was asked to do so. Only those newly arrived Japanese and Kibei were asked to sign this Allegiance pledge and some of them were sent to Tule Lake. Many people went to Tule Lake.

Q: Did these people demonstrate before they left for Tule Lake? Were there any demonstration or group gathering?

A: Perhaps they did. I don't really know.

Q: What were some of the inconveniences living in the camp?

A: There weren't too many inconveniences in the camp. Well, we couldn't write to Japan. The Red Cross offered to send a post card to Japan for us. We wrote, but the post cards never arrived in Japan.

Q: Did you learn many things in the camp?

A: Yes I did.

Q: What did you learn?

A: I learned English. I wish I had continued to learn English. I went to study English, studied making flowers and learned Tsumami daiku.

Q: What is Tsumami daiku?

A: Tsumami daiku - we did it often in Japan - we would design some art work on some paper, crepe paper, and cut it out, paste it onto the design. After we framed it, it looked very real. We went to lessons like these.



Q: You call this tsumami daiku?

A: Yes, it's called tsumami daiku. My daughter who went to Japan studied calligraphy in camp. We were both invited to study tanka but since we were taking so many other lesssons, we decided not to take it. My daughter's calligraphy teacher wanted me to go with her to study calligraphy but . . . my daughter went to study it.

Q: Some people had short wave radios in camp, didn't they?

A: Yes, some didn. The men would dig . . . they were so clever, these men . . . and I heard that they all got together and listed to it. We never went. They would dig deeply and . . . why did they bother to get hold of a short wave, anyway? A person who had gone to Tule Lake sent a letter to one of our neighbor who lived in the next block. The letter told of how many American ships were sunk and things like that. This man would go around telling everyone about this letter. But, Reverend, I really didn't think Japan would win the war, though, of course, if Japan did I wouldn't have minded. I never thought Japan would win. I always prayed that Japan would surrender and make truce with the Americans. There were people who said, "Japan is winning. Japan is winning." But, I thought Japan would never win. There was a man man, I believe from Hiroshima, named Sasaki-san. He was a splendid person. He liked playing Gō. Really a splendid person. He was a great leader, a model citizen. He was indeed a terrific man. When we were about to leave the camp in 1943 (was it that year?) we went to visit him. We said we would come by the following morning because it looked like we had intruded, but he said we may not see each other again and he changed clothes and talked with us. He would often speak to my daughter. He was a great person, just talking about him brings tears to my eyes. He was such a model man.



Q: What kind of things did you say (to your daughter)?

A: He would say, "don't give up being a member of the chorus - singing group. Don't settle for a profession which looks good only superficially when you graduate from school. The best job is a steady one. Don't choose a job just to impress people. Be careful about that. When you get older, those things become meaningless and you won't be able to continue forever. Choose a job which you can do even when you are old and a job where you can help others." He always told these things to my daughter, calling her Konkon. I believe he told her very good things. My daughter still talks about Mr. Sasaki even to this day.

Q: Was Mr. Sasaki a Christian?

A: I don't know whether he was a Christian or a Buddhist, but he knew about Christianity, Buddhism - there wasn't anything he didn't know about. He knew many things. He was a great man. A really good man.

Q: You and your family left Gila River Camp, right?

A: Yes, that's right.

Q: Was that in 1944?

A: Was it in 1944? War ended in 1945, right?

Q: yes.

A: Then we left in 1944.

Q: Where did you go after the camp?

A: We went to Philadelphia.

Q: Why did you go there?

A: My children said that the schools were good there so we decided to go there. They said, let's go because the schools are good. WE thought it was a good idea to follow our children so we decided to all go there.

Q: Did you have a specific place to go. Did you make an arrange



ment with a hotel or a motel?

A: Yes, we did. We had already sent a letter and wrote to a lady named Miss Marilyn and she sent a reply to our letter. She told us to come, so we went. On the way to Philadelphia we saw a lot of Japanese soldiers on the train.

Q: You did? Were they Nisei?

A: Yes, they were. The military men had sandwiches made especially for them at each station and some of these men would give us the sandwiches. They were so kind to us. When we arrived in Philadelphia we were confused and lost. One of the soldiers on the train said he was from Philadelphia so we showed him the address. He called a cab for us and made arrangements with the cab driver telling him where to take us. He was so kind to us.

Q: Was he White?

A: Yes. A white soldier. We corresponded with him for a long time, but we haven't heard from him recently. We were just talking about him the other day. We would get letters from him and we would send him letters, too.

Q: How was Philadelphia?

A: It was fine. At first . . . unlike Chicago, those of us who didn't understand the language had problems getting a job. We heard that in Chicago that it was easy to get a job as a seamstress, car factory worker, or other jobs even unskilled laborers could get jobs such as candy making and so forth. But in Philadelphia such jobs did not exist for us. Because we couldn't find a job, we really went through some hard times. I worked for a family even though I couldn't understand the language too well. I got across to them that I could be trusted. I worked at the first place for 4 years, left for one year, went back to work for 4 years, quit for 1 year



and returned again and worked for 2 years. My first employer thought that I wouldn't work as much as I was supposed to so I worked at very cheap wages. Then, someone told me that I was working at (slave's) wages so I decided to get a better paying job. My last household was a very good one. The man, Col. Gardner worked under Gen. McCarther, had been in Japan and had seen the Emperor sign the surrender papers. I worked there for a while. He was a very good man. He said that he saw Emperor Hirohito's tears with his own eyes. He talked about the Japanese to me quite often. I worked for a good family. I had to retire because my hands wouldn't move any longer. I had to stop working. They were very good people. They knew (Mr. Kaga) and ministers came to their homes frequently. When (Mr. Kaga) came to the house, Mr. Gardner would call me to the parlor and introduce me as a member of the family. They were really good people.

Q: What did your husband do?

A: My husband became ill and he was resting. At first when we came to Philadelphia he worked at a college dormitory, but he had to quit because of his high blood pressure. He stayed at our apartment and I would go home on my holidays.

Q: What happen after Philadelphia? You retired, right? You had to stop working and did you still stay in Philadelphia for a while?

A: Yes, I stopped working, but I worked as an office cleaning lady just in the mornings from 7 to 9. I worked in an office owned by a friend of Mr Lance Carott, a man who was very kind to my daughter. The office was located very close to where I lived. I worked for 2 hours daily. Since I was free the rest of the day, I would go to the Japanese shipyard where the Japanese freight ships landed and I did some help work. I would also help give a tour of the city



Q: When did you return to (California)?

A: in 1955, August.

Q: So, you were in Philadelphia for 10 years.

A: Yes, we were there for 10 years.

Q: Your husband . . .

A: He passed away in 1958.

Q: Did he pass away here in California?

A: No, in Philadelphia. No, he passed away in 1948 in Philadelphia.

Q: So, you have been alone since then?

A: Yes. Its been 38 years this year.

Q: Why did you come back to California?

A: Many of my daughter's friends were here (in California) and they were pleading with her to return. Her boss (in Philadelphia) was very kind to her, but I think she thought things over - there aren't too many young men over there. She probably though she would be able to marry more readily in California. My daughter told me she was considering returning to California and I told her it was her choice.

Q: "You can go if you like. Take care of yourself and if you marry and settle down, I might join you", I told her. She went in 1954. My daughter came to for me at the end of July, 1955.

Q: You lived all alone for one full year, then?

A: Yes, I lived by myslef. During this time, I worked 2 hours each morning - from 7 to 9 - cleaning an office. I was free the rest of the day. I was in God's mercy at this time - I went into His service.

Q: When did you join the Baptist Church?

A: I was baptized after I returned here.



Q: When did you start going to Church?

A: I started as soon as I arrived in Philadelphia.

Q: Did you go to a White American church?

A: No, to a Japanese church.

Q: In Philadelphia?

A: Yes. The reverend there was Reverend Sakaguchi from Stockton. He had lived in Stockton and also in Fresno. He was of the Chōdo branch.

Q: Reverend Sakaguchi?

A: Yes. Reverend Machida or one of his relatives was to get married . . . anyway, he came to replace Reverend Sakaguchi (?) Anyway, did you know the late Reverend Nishimura? He financed the building of the Church.

Q: ( ).

A: Yes.

Q: Is this church still standing?

A: Yes, it is

Q: Is it a Japanese church?

A: Yes, It's a Japanese church. Reverend Shimada from Japan is the head of the church now. Many of the people who attended the church (while I was there) have passed away and only a few are left. Many of the Reverends are now coming directly from Japan and they bring young men with them. These young men conduct prayer meetings and Bible studies. It seems like the church is (kikidasu). I went there the other day.

Q: You returned here in 1955, right?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you join the Babtist Church here?

A: Yes. I was babtized by Reverend Tajima. I was about to be baptized (in Philadelphia), but I was told that it was important to be



baptized by a good Reverend (I myself would never say such things and I don't really think it's very good thing to say). People would advise me to do various things. Do you know Reverend Iino from (Shizuoka?)?

Q: No, I don't

A: He has a beard. His name is Iino Jūdo. Everyone told me to be baptized by him and I became very close to him. But, I was also indebted to Reverend Sakaguchi and I believed he was a good reverend I just couldn't go to an outsider, Reverend, now matter how good he was; I just couldn't go over my own reverend. So, about being baptized . . . my mind doesn't change with the change of location. I promised to be a child of God and follow Him. I told my friends to rest at ease, that I would be baptized as soon as I returned to Los Angeles. So, I was baptized here.

Q: When did you get baptized?

A: I was baptized in 1955 on Christmas. It was the first Christmas after I returned here.

Q: As an Issei, what things would <sup>you</sup> like to teach the Sansei and the Yonsei?

A: I would like to teach them to believe in the existence of God and to value God. We are all sinners and we must redeem our sins as Jesus Christ did for us. I would like for them to believe in this and to read the Bible. They should obey and act according to the commandments of the Bible. I think this is the most important thing. I would encourage them to read the Bible and also for them to pray. I believe praying is very important. I would like for them to ask for God's help when they are in need and ask God to open the way or ask for his help. We must ask for God's help. Because we are not omnipotent like God, we are weak human beings. We must ask for God's help. I believe we must teach our children while



they are young; they must learn to clasp their hands and pray.

Q: Do you believe that it's valuable for young people to have pride?

A: Yes, I do. Where ever we go we will always be recognized as Japanese; Japanese will always look like Japanese. Bad things may happen where ever we are, in Japan, too, but it is valuable to be proud that our parents and grandparents were born in Japan. There is no need to hide that one is Japanese. They should be proud of their heritage. I want all of them (Yonsei and Sansei) to be welcomed warmly by everyone.

Q: Do you think it is "good" that this generation is studying and learning about Japanese culture and tradition and that it is becoming quite popular?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: What are some of the good features of the Japanese?

A: Well, the good feature of the Japanese is . . . what shall I say . . . I suppose it is our politeness. Yes.

Q: Politeness?

A: Yes. I think we have very good manners, but the Japanese recently don't have much of this - it comes in glimpses only. Our generation has respect for our superiors. What shall I say . . . I believe this is very important. Everyone is the same in America. People who are raised in America don't think in this manner. In my case, I live with my grandchildren. My daughter and son-in-law are strict with their children and sometimes my grandchildren would (talk back ) to me or say some unpleasant things, my daughter scolds them quite severely. I feel sorry for my grandchildren. When they complain about their grandmother, they are scolded. I think this disciplining is ver good for them.

Q: In retrospect, when was the most difficult time for you?



A: The most difficult times . . . well . . . I had many difficult times. Let's see which was the most difficult?

Q: It doesn't have to be the most difficult, but when did you have the more apparent hardships?

A: Well . . . when I became a Christian and heard that we must turn the other cheek to our enemies in order to follow Jesus Christ, I thought to myself, "I guess this is correct. Had I been nice to those people who had wronged us, perhaps things would have been different". Yes, I believe so. I really believe so. Yes, I believe so. I wasn't a Buddhist or a Christian in those days, but had I had this (Christian) faith, I probably would have thought in this manner in the old days. Another time of hardships was when we couldn't find a job in Philadelphia. Our savings dwindled and in April . . . Reverend, what shall I say . . . I guess I recover quickly. I didn't suffer from the situation too much. I don't know if I was brought up like this since my childhood, but I never bickered about minute things. I guess my son's lack of interest in school was the hardest time in my life. Yes. As I look back, I feel I need not have been thinking about this so much, but . . . I guess that's how I was in those days.

Q: Let's review what we have covered so far and see if we left out anything. Do you think about the old days?

A: Yes, I do.

Q: When you do, what comes to mind?

A: I think about the time I was in Japan. I think about my happy school days. When I returned home recently we had a class reunion and most of my schoolmates had passed away. Those of us remaining got together and talked about the past. We enjoyed ourselves. A



Among the classmates who have past away, there were students who did well in school as well as the poorer achievers. I think about my schoolmates like these and my school years. I think about (ichichiji), my mother and things like this. Life was hard, but with God's kindness I am able to live comfortably like this now. **I have** my present situation because of my hardships. We had problems when our children were little. People who knew me in Japan and knew that I had a fairly easy life in Japan often ask me how I survived (as I was going through those times).

Q: What kind of hardships are you referring to?

A: I had to cook, I had to work. I had to live in an unclean camp. My acquaintances told me how well I had handled my hardships as they watched me go through them. I survived my hardships. It isn't to say I have overcome (all of them), but . . . I am . . . happy to have come to America. Had I stayed in Japan . . . My old classmates came to visit me when I would return home to Japan and they would say I had grown up to be very interesting. After they spent the night with me they would say, "wow, you have grown up to be so interesting. We/I are/am jealous. They said they would not come to my husband's home because it was a "miya".

Q: What is a "miya"?

A: Miya is like a temple. They said it was difficult to go to my husband's home because it was a shrine. There are many disciples at my husband's home. It was difficult for Christians to go, to my friends said and so they would come to my house. I believe that had I not gone to America I may not have known about Jesus Christ and may have lived in this ignorance all my life. There was only one Christian family in our village. The wife would ( ) and her son helped out in Sunday school. There was only one Christian:



family. I sent them many religious materials from America. I also sent Christian materials to my home - rather, to my brother's house. I sent them materials that were easy to understand. I sent them the Bible, but they don't talk about becoming Christians. They are mixed with (Hodoku-sha). Had I remained married in Japan, I would not have known about God and would have died without knowing God. I'm so grateful to have come to America because I have learned Jesus Christ since coming here. I am very grateful. I'm always grateful for this.

Q: What do you mean there were many disciples at your husband home?

A: My husband's family home is a shrine and there were many students living there. It was a shrine where people brought offerings during the fall and spring, the rice and wheat seasons. The people would go visit the shrine and ask for blessings and good luck. These are the reasons why the shrine existed, but now it is not prosperous at all. My neice is the Shrine priestess. Because the shrine is not profitable, they have to farm. They had never farmed before, but since the War they have (resorted) to farming. It was a (kensha) so it was quite a Shrine. The shrine is a family tradition and it had existed for ever 2,000 years. My niece is the 78th generation priest. They are an old family. The shrine tradition must continue and must keep up the cemetery and so forth. The children marry outsiders now, something they had not done in the past. In the old days they married within the family. Although aristocracy and commons do not exist now, but this family was of the aristocratic blood. People said this family was quite strict. I'm very grateful to have come to America.

Q: Perhaps if you had stayed in Japan you might not have gone through



the hardships you encountered in America.

A: Probably not. I could have married into a good family - into many good families, one in particular. That family is still well respected.

Q: Did you ever wish you had married into that family?

A: No, I never did. No, not at all. No matter how good the family is in Japan, one has to work on the farm in a farming family. So, I never gave such thoughts.

A: What is the most valuable thing that your parent taught you?  
(in retrospect)

A: Well . . . they taught me the idea of giri (obligation). They told me never to forget giri. They always told me this: All humans must understand the concept of giri. Don't ever forget giri. They also taught me the concept of "nasake" (compassion) or love in Christian terminology. (It's like \_\_\_\_). My parents always said that since we already have a house, we must be kind to less fortunate families (komaya).

Q: What is a Komaya?

A: It means a small home, a family in need. My parents always said we must help these people. When I was young my mother . . . there was an orphanage in Okayama . . . are you familiar with it?

Q: Yes.

A: It is a Salvation Army orphanage. The Salvation Army orphanage came to our home twice a year, once in the fall and then again in the spring. He came to collect old things like old clothes and such items. My mother would say, "the Salvation Army man will come soon and I want to give him some things" and she would start fixing our old clothes, remaking and resewing them. The clothes turned out very pretty. I really liked my mother's way of thinking. I'm



like her now. When I was living in town and worked during the various seasons, I would give my neighbors soy sauce and other things they came to borrow. They had many children and were going through some hard times. I would give them a large potful of soy sauce. We bought soy sauce in tubs in those days - in Shushō (I don't know how big the tubs really were, but they were large). I would tell my neighbor that they need not repay it. I did this quite often. Yamada would see me do this and would say, "this is America, not Japan." He would tell me that in America there were no inferiors and superiors; everyone was equal. I just couldn't get over my old habits. He scolded me for it often.

Q: Did you have many books at home?

A: Yes, we did. We had so many, many books. Old books.

Q: What kind of books did you have?

A: Like hyaku-nin isshu. My father had thick books, Reverend, old books with beautiful bindings and paper. We had many, many books at home. My mother read Ona Daigaku and books of that sort.

Q: Does that mean she had extensive education?

A: Probably. She probably had an extensive schooling. For her generation she probably had quite an education.

Q: Did you learn about Minomiya?

A: Yes. They told me about Kaibara Ekken saying, "if you take care of your health, you'll live long, even if you are not strong like Mr Ekken". I learned many things from my parents. I am very lucky to have had such good parents.

Q: Did you ever hear about America when you were in Japan?

A: Yes, I heard about America. Actually, my elder brother was in the Navy. He went to (Yōkōkai) and so they landed in ports like San Pedro and San Francisco. When he landed in those ports he would



send us picture post cards and he brought home Western clothes. He brought home many pictures and picture post cards - pictures taken in America. So, I knew quite a bit about America. One of our relatives lived in America, an aunt. He told us that this aunt brought him sushi and we marveled at this. "I didn't know there's sushi in America", we said. He told us the time the navy men were invited to a picnic in San Francisco where many young Japanese children attended. These children sang songs about loving Japan and welcoming Japanese soldiers. My brother told us that this brought tears to his eyes. When I heard this from my brother, I also cried. Yes, I had heard quite a lot about America (prior to coming to this country).

Q: There were Japanese in America already at that time, then?

A: Yes, there were Japanese. Yes.

Q: When you left Japan did you feel that you would never return again? Were you sad? How did you feel?

A: Well . . . I never thought I wouldn't be able to return. There were three children in my husband's family. His elder brother had his own home. His elder sister was a teacher at a girl's school and had left home. Only my husband was left, so his mother arranged it so that he would inherit all of her things. The mother's property was to be Yoshio's. There was a water mill . . . do you know what a water mill is?

Q: Yes.

A: It goes round and round . . . One would be able to live off the mill itself; it carried rice, so one would not have to go into farming. His mother told him that all this would be here for him since there were only few children in the family. There was no need for him to remain in America. My husband had (initially) come to America



to stay for a brief time, but look what happened. He came with the intent to stay only for a short while.

Q: Did you feel America was better after you had stayed for 6 weeks . . . 6 months?

A: Yes, I did. I was treated well in Japan, but I felt like I had to come to a new land.

Q: Didn't your husband have any intentions of retuning home?

A: No, he didn't. My husband's elder brother sent him a letter stating that he needed a letter releasing the land he had inherited - my husband had quite a number of mountain land which wasn't affected by McCarther's rule. Their mother had died and this letter had to be signed within 60 days of her death. It stated he would give up all of his mother's inheritance. My husband sent a letter stating that he would release the property rights to his brother. Though my husband never had much money, he wasn't a greedy man. He never considering keeping the land in Japan. I was just talking about this with my daughter the other day - I hear people who return to Japan and complain about not getting anything. We laughed about it saying, "I'm glad we never such such things. When I was in Japan, my brother and sister-in-law told me to come to their home anytime and to let them know if I needed money. Because of this, I felt like I hadn't been in America for as long as I have been. I didn't feel sad or lonely when I came to America.

Q: You said you were to be treated to a feast when you landed in Hawaii. Were you?

A: Well, Yes. They bought us rice cakes, watermelon , sushi and other deligcious founds. We went as a large group and we were all fed. That man who treated us, he had to treat all of us. We jokingly said to each other that we must have spent a lot of his father's



money. I don't know . . . On the way back from Japan the first first time, we were suppose to land in San Francisco, but instead we landed in San Pedro near Los Angles. I met two men, sons of a soy sauce company owner of Okayama on the ship. They were very kind to my son. I sent them cherries in return for their kindness.

Q: How many times have you returned to Japan?

A: Three times.

Q: When was the second trip?

A: The first trip was when I was young and I took my two children. I returned again in 1970. Then again in 1974.

Q: When you went back in 1970, I'm sure you were quite surprised at (the changes in Japan)?

A: Yes, I was. I hadn't been back for so long. We went to Osaka. No, I arrived in Osaka and since I had come in a group we disbanded here. My family came to meet me in Osaka. Among the family members there was a bride I had never seen before.

Q: When you son and daughter married, did you want them to marry in an American or a Japanese style? Did you want them to marry in a Japanese style like the one you had with your mother making all the arrangements?

A: No, my daughter took care of everything on her own. She took care of the entire affair.

Q: Do you think that it is better this way?

A: Yes. Yes. I never gave thought to having a Japanese wedding.

Q: But you were married in a Japanese style, right?

A: Yes.

Q: So, did you feel it was better that way?

A: No, I didn't. We must do "in Rome as the Romans do", as the saying goes.



Q: Weren't you ever homesick?

A: No, not really.

Q: When did you finally get use to living in America?

A: Well . . .

Q: Did you get accustomed to the life here right away?

A: Yes, I did. Of course I had to go through an adjustment period, but I had an attitude towards this whole affair: I felt I could go back (to Japan) any time I wished so I didn't torture myself.

Q: There were cases where some of the wives didn't know how to use (western) stoves and didn't know that some things were done differently in this country. Did you have to go through much difficulties like this?

A: No, I didn't.

Q: I knew a wife who was living in Wyoming and she had never seen coal before. She had to use coal for the stove, but she tried to light it like it was charcoal so the stove wouldn't light up. She got in trouble because of this.

A: Coal is hard. I used coal quite often in Philadelphia. Some people used coal in stoves. Do you know hiroka, Reverend? It's a type of stove made out of mud and dirt. I've made rice this way. I didn't like cooking this way at all. Kerosene cooking is not bad but (I've used \_\_\_\_\_).

Q: Was this in Vacaville?

A: No, in Suisun. We lived in Suisun for a while and I cooked this way for several people. I've done this in the past. I had children at the time. It was in Suisun . . . Mrs. Kitabashi would come to visit me and say, "you really are using it". I guess I just don't take hardships too hard. I really think so. Maybe I give up easy, I don't know what to call it. I don't think I've gone through



really hard times. Perhaps I thought life was hard at the time I went through it, but now that I look back, it doesn't seem like life was so hard.

Q: How did you feel when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

A: At the time, I was shocked. I didn't understand why . . . call it reckless . . . If we compare Japan and America, I just didn't think Japan could win (the war). I wondered why Japan did such a thing. I felt sorry for the Japanese.

Q: When did you retrieve your belongings you left with your friend, Mrs. McCurry?

A: We retrieved them. . . when was it? . . . We asked her to sell the refrigerators. We also asked her to sell the car. I remember her sending some money to us for them.

Q: Was this when you were in Philadelphia?

A: I think it was when we were still in camp.

Q: Did you decide not to return to Vacaville?

A: Yes, that's right. My children told us that schools were better in Philadelphia so we decided to move out there. Some people in camp asked us to return (to California) with them. They said, "let's go back together". But, since our children were so insistent and although my husband had wanted to go back, I asked my husband to listen to our children. I also told him that if he really wanted to return that we would. I asked him to stick with this plan. So, we finally decided to go back East.

Q: When your husband said let's "return", did he mean to return to Vacaville?

A: I don't know. He probably wanted to go where the other people were going.

Q: Was there anyone in Vacaville?



- A: No, noone. **Vacaville** has become deserted (of Japanese). There may be one or two Japanese families there, but I don't think there are too Japanese living there now.
- Q: Did the Whites in Vacaville act against the Japanese in any manner when the war started?
- A: No, not at all. Everyone was very kind. They never told us to \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_. We didn't have such incidents.
- Q: Did your husband get all your belongings together?
- A: Yes, he did. He did it all.
- Q: You probably lost out a great deal when you were forced to evacuate.
- A: Yes, we all did. I don't know if it was a total loss, but we had to get rid of most of our new things.
- Q: Did you have to sell them?
- A: Yes.
- Q: You probably didn't get even half the price of the original selling them as second hand.
- A: Yes, that's true.
- Q: Did you hear much about Christianity while living in camp?
- A: No, not too much. But . . . I already had a copy of the Lord's Prayer and an outline of the Book of Psalms. I was going through that period in my life - the change of life - so I read them quite often. I had to stay in my room and couldn't even go to the cafeteria to eat. Someone usually brought some food for me.
- Q: Was this in camp?
- A: Yes, but after I got well, I was able to go back to work again.
- Q: How long were you bed ridden?
- A: Quite a long time. About a month or two - at least for two months. I was quite ill.
- Q: Was Gila camp located in a hot area?



A: Yes, it was a very hot place, but as we say in Japanese, "if you live in a place, it becomes your castle". It wasn't a bad place.

Q: Do you have any mother thoughts to add?

A: Sell . . . in camp or in my home? Well . . .

I have been very grateful for each day these last twenty years. When I returned (to California) I worked for Sees company - do you know Sees, the camdy company?

Q: Yes, I do.

A: I worked there for 10 years after I returned here. I worked as a part-time helper during the busy seasons. I worked there for 10 years. Initially I was the only Japanese working there. All the workers were White. I was the only one there and I couldn't understand the language very well. Even the members of the (sutto-kai) accused me if something went wrong or if someone made any mistakes. I don't think many people had kind feelings toward me. Some were kind, but other certainly weren't. I worked there for 10 years and I wasn't perturbed at whatever they said to me. I didn't complain; I just worked hard. At the end, members of the (sutto-kai) trusted me totally. If anything happend during work, they would come and ask me about it. They would come to me and complain about others talking about them and that they were innocent of what they were accused. They would complain loudly to me, but I would always tell them, "this is the (north?) base. Don't talk. At the end the truth will be understood by everyone." Everyone called me Mine there and they would come to me and say, "Mine, Mine. What you said was so true, At the end, when I went to Japan in 1970, they called me the day after I returned and asked me to come back to work as soon as possible. But, I had walked too much when I was in Japan and I injured my back. I couldn't go back to work. They would still call



me and ask me to come back saying that I wouldn't have to lift heavy things. They wanted me just to teach the new workers and not to really work. They came to my home quite often. I believe the most important thing for human being is to be honest. I don't care if no one believes me, so long as I follow the words of Jesus Christ. At the end after 10 years my fellow workers finally understood me and were kind to me. I believe this is God's blessing and I am always thankful for this. I was the only Japanese working there.

Q: How many workers were there?

A: There were many workers. There are different sections - packing section, mail order section. . . both men and women worked there.

Q: Which section did you work in?

A: I worked in the packing and mail order sections. Many people make mistakes in this section. In the beginning, people would bring all the mistakes to my table and tell me that I had done it. I didn't say a word, I would just correct them. At the end I would sign the packages I did and if someone brought the incorrect ones to me I would say to Mary, a member of the (sutto-kai), "Mary, this isn't mine". She would say, "oh, I'm sorry." Gradually they began to believe me. We all must work earnestly. I worked there for 10 years now I can still buy Sees products at a discount.

Q: 10 years . . . so you worked there until 1965?

A: No until 1970 . . .

Q: Until 1970?

A: No, until 1969.

Q: You said earlier that you couldn't move your wrist. Did that get cured?

A: I went to see a doctor in Philadelphia and he told me it was caused



by my "change of life". A white woman told me that one time she tried to get some money she had left underneath her pillows, she couldn't move her hand. She said she got cured after 2 shots. I went to see a Japanese doctor, a Dr. Hirata from Miyagi prefecture. He gave me a shot twice and I was cured immediately.

Q: You have gone through some hard times, haven't you?

A: Yes. Other people may think I've gone through many many hardships but I really don't think so . . . I guess I don't take things too hard. I really dislike the church's (monshaku). I really dislike it very much. I believe my hardships are no different from others . . . as long as I live in this lifetime, I will always be grateful for my life.

Q: We are going to translate this interview into English and have the Sansei and Yonsei read it. College students have problems when they study about the Issei. This will probably be about 30 to 40 pages after it is translated and type written. May we do this?

A: Yes, I guess so.

Q: We don't know how long this is going to take - maybe 3 to 5 years - but we are planning to compile a book. We aren't sure of the format, but we will publish a book. We need your permission to include your memoirs as part of our book - your experiences and what you have told us in this interview are yours by law - either you may retain this right or you may give this right to our committee. May we have your permission?

A: Yes, yes you May.

Q: This means we will have the right to freely write up this interview. is this alright with you?

A: Yes, yes that's fine. But, this requires financial expenditures, doesn't it?



Q: We have received donations from Church members - we have received donations from this church, too. We ask for donations every year. We are planning to ask for bank donations as well. We probably won't receive too much, but . . . Majority of the interviewees have been church members and it is difficult to ask non-church members for interviews. We have received about \$100 from various churches every year. Our church has donated \$250 this year.

A: Oh, I see. This church must be rich, then. This church must be rich.

Q: The committee doesn't have too much money to work with. If we had a substantial amount, we could finish this project right away, but it takes time to collect the necessary money.

A: Yes, I'm sure it does. But, this is so much work for you, Reverend.

Q: Well. . . May I get your signature here?

A: Yes.

Q: Today is August 25th. Please date it first and then sign it.

A: Date first? Alright . . . today is . . . August 25th

Q: Please sign here.

A: Below the date? Alright.

Q: Please write your address

A: Alright. I can't write too well . . .







NAME: MRS. MINE YAMADA

Age: 75 years old

Birthdat: August 22, 1901

Place of Birth: Wakayama

Came to the United States: 1920 (as a new bride)

Major Occupation:

Husband's Occupation:

Relocation Camp: Gila River Camp

Interview Date: August 25, 1976

Interviewer: Heihachiro Takarabe

Translated Date: January, 1979

Translator: Takako M. Yoshida